

**Belinda Moffat,
Head of
Enforcement,
Financial Markets
Authority**

Belinda talks about what excites her at the Financial Markets Authority, in the community, and away from work, and who has inspired her professionally.

This is the second in a series of Q&As with winners of the CLANZ Wigley + Company award for contribution to the community.

December 2012

● **What attracted you to the legal profession?**

I wanted a career that enabled me to contribute to growing a strong and successful country and law met that objective. I was initially keen on being a criminal barrister or working as a diplomat for Foreign Affairs. I went to the United Kingdom in 1994 to do a Criminology Masters at Cambridge. Doors opened into commercial work while I was in England, and I became a litigation solicitor in the commercial field.

● **What excites you about your work now?**

At the Financial Markets Authority I'm part of an organisation with a significant role to play not just in facilitating and promoting New Zealand's capital markets, but with a broader mandate of serving all New Zealanders by helping to build a strong economy. And I love being part of a team of really talented people who are all passionate about their work and about ensuring our new entity succeeds and is effective.

● **Who has inspired you in the profession?**

I was very fortunate to have Sir Geoffrey Palmer supervising me when I started my career at Chapman Tripp. He has an incredible legal mind, and is passionate about New Zealand and about the law. He was also a very patient supervisor and an excellent teacher. Another inspiring person was Keir Starmer QC, a young barrister in London who I worked with on pro bono death penalty cases. He was really passionate about



human rights. He ran his own practice, but did a huge amount of pro bono human rights work in England and throughout the Caribbean. He is now the Director of Public Prosecutions in the UK. I feel quite privileged to have worked with him. I've also been really inspired by other women lawyers of my generation who have had the courage to step off the law firm path and try something different. I've been lucky enough to have known a number of women who have dared to be different and quite creative in taking on different challenges in their careers.

Belinda Moffat, Head
of Enforcement,
Financial Markets
Authority

● ***Work / life balance – how do you achieve that?***

That's one thing I'm not very good at, although I do try hard to achieve it. I've always had demanding jobs, but I make a conscious decision to spend time with family and friends, relaxing and having fun, even when I'm busy. It's important to do that because having work life balance does enable you to make better decisions.

● ***How do you enjoy spending time away from work?***

I like to get away for weekends. I enjoy the outdoors, skiing, being at the beach – relaxing with friends and family, sharing good food and wine, and having lots of fun together.

● ***What prompted you to get involved in community work?***

I feel very strongly that the world has given me so much, I want to put a lot back. I particularly like helping others who don't have access to the legal system. Everyone should have equal access. That's why I did six years of pro bono work in London, mainly working on behalf of prisoners on death row in the Caribbean, on their final appeals to the Privy Council.

● ***What community work has given you the greatest satisfaction?***

It's all been very satisfying. Even the small cases I've worked on in a community law centre have been rewarding, because they make an important difference to the people involved. With the death penalty work the stakes don't get any higher – it's about a person's life. Telling a mother that her 18 year old son is not going to be

hanged is intensely satisfying. I've also received huge satisfaction out of my work with Dress for Success. It's not just about giving women suitable clothes to wear for job interviews, it's an end-to-end process of supporting women and giving them confidence in themselves – building their confidence on the inside and the outside.

● ***What do you get out of it?***

I get an enormous sense of satisfaction from giving back. Knowing that you're empowering someone is very fulfilling, and that's what we do at Dress for Success.

● ***What's the best piece of word advice you ever received?***

Do what you're passionate about. There's parts of all jobs that aren't great, but if you're having a particularly hard day or a hard week you'll get through it if you're really passionate about what you're doing.

I learned a very simple but effective tool on a Global Women leadership course I attended last year. It's called STOP. When you're facing something difficult you need to: Step back; Think; Organise your thinking; Proceed. Very simple, but very effective.

● ***What advice would you give to young lawyers?***

Follow your passion. And appreciate the opportunities you've been given through your education. Remember to take time to give back to the community. I get very frustrated by lawyers who aren't prepared to give anything back, even just a couple of hours of their time. It is very satisfying and it makes you a more complete person.

Wigley+Company

PO Box 10842
Level 7/107 Customhouse Quay, Wellington
T +64(4) 472 3023 E info@wigleylaw.com

and in Auckland
T +64(9) 307 5957

www.wigleylaw.com